
**POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND PROFESSIONALISM: BASIS FOR
TEACHERS' WORK HAPPINESS**

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.2864>**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between teachers' positive psychology, professionalism, and happiness at work among public elementary school teachers in Kidapawan City and Cotabato during the school year 2025–2026. A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was utilized, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection. A total of 260 teachers participated in the quantitative phase using stratified random sampling, while 25 teachers were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. Data were gathered through adapted survey questionnaires measuring positive psychology based on the PERMA model, teacher professionalism, and workplace happiness. Statistical tools such as weighted mean, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis were employed, while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. Findings revealed that teachers demonstrated very high levels of positive psychology, professionalism, and happiness at work. Teachers exhibited strong character, commitment to continuous improvement, high pedagogical competence, and active collaboration beyond the classroom. Likewise, teachers reported high engagement, satisfaction, and emotional attachment to their work. However, results indicated that most dimensions of positive psychology and professionalism showed weak and non-significant relationships with happiness at work. Qualitative findings highlighted teachers' lived experiences emphasizing fulfillment, resilience, collaboration, and challenges such as workload and resource limitations. The study concludes that while teachers exhibit strong psychological and professional attributes, these do not always directly translate into measurable increases in workplace happiness, suggesting the influence of external organizational and contextual factors.

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology has emerged as a significant framework in education, shifting focus from stress and burnout to the development of well-being, resilience, and professional fulfillment among teachers. Grounded in Seligman's PERMA model, positive psychology emphasizes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as essential components of human flourishing. In the teaching profession, these elements contribute to motivation, effectiveness, and professional identity. At the same time, teacher professionalism has evolved into a multidimensional construct encompassing ethical conduct, pedagogical competence, continuous improvement, and collaboration within and beyond the classroom. Studies suggest that teachers with strong psychological well-being tend to demonstrate higher levels of professionalism and commitment to their work. However, despite growing interest in these constructs, limited research has examined how positive psychology and professionalism collectively influence teachers' happiness at work. Happiness at work, characterized by engagement, job satisfaction, and emotional attachment, is critical in sustaining teacher performance and retention. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the level of teachers' positive psychology and professionalism, assess their happiness at work, examine relationships and influences among these variables, and explore teachers' lived experiences related to these constructs.

METHODS

This study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design, allowing the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase involved 260 public elementary school teachers selected through stratified random sampling from District I and II of Kidapawan City, Magpet West District, and Makilala. The qualitative phase included 25 purposively selected teachers who met specific criteria such as teaching experience and willingness to participate. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire divided into three parts: positive psychology (based on the PERMA model), teacher professionalism, and happiness at work. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Statistical tools used included weighted mean to determine levels of variables, Pearson correlation to assess relationships, and multiple linear regression to determine influence among variables. For the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted and recorded, then transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes. Ethical procedures such as securing permissions, informed consent, and confidentiality were strictly observed throughout the research process.

RESULTS

The findings revealed that teachers exhibited very high levels of positive psychology and professionalism across all dimensions. Teachers demonstrated strong character traits, including confidence, ethical behavior, and respect for students, with a weighted mean of 4.43. Commitment to change and continuous improvement was also rated very high (WM = 4.47), indicating active engagement in professional development and innovation. Similarly, subject and pedagogical knowledge (WM = 4.50) and obligations beyond the classroom (WM = 4.54) reflected high competence and collaboration among teachers. In terms of happiness at work, teachers reported very high levels of work engagement (WM = 4.52), satisfactory conditions (WM = 4.48), and emotional attachment (WM = 4.43), suggesting strong motivation, satisfaction, and organizational commitment. However, correlation analysis showed that most dimensions of positive psychology and professionalism had weak and non-significant relationships with work happiness, indicating that these variables may not directly predict happiness. Qualitative findings revealed that teachers experience fulfillment through meaningful work, positive relationships, and professional growth, but also face challenges such as heavy workload, limited resources, and organizational constraints.

DISCUSSION

The results highlight that teachers possess strong psychological well-being and professional competencies, which are essential for effective teaching and student development. Consistent with positive psychology theory, teachers who experience positive emotions, engagement, and meaning demonstrate higher levels of motivation and professional commitment. Similarly, high levels of professionalism reflect teachers' dedication to continuous improvement, ethical practice, and collaboration. However, the finding that positive psychology and professionalism have weak relationships with happiness at work suggests that workplace happiness is influenced by more complex and multifaceted factors. Organizational conditions, leadership support, workload, compensation, and work-life balance may play a more significant role in shaping teachers' happiness than individual psychological traits alone. This aligns with the Job Demands–Resources model, which emphasizes the importance of external resources in promoting well-being. The qualitative findings further support this by highlighting both the intrinsic rewards of teaching and the external challenges teachers face. Overall, the study suggests that enhancing teacher happiness requires not only strengthening individual psychological and professional attributes

but also improving organizational support systems, policies, and working conditions to create a more holistic and sustainable teaching environment.